

House Committee Will Probe Classification of Documents

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Rep. F. Edward Hebert (D-La.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, yesterday announced "a major inquiry into the problem of proper classification and handling of government information involving the national security."

He said it was "a coincidence" that the investigation would come on the heels of the release by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson of secret government documents concerning American policy in the Indo-Pakistani war.

Nonetheless, the disclosure of the top-secret Pentagon papers on the history of Vietnam war last summer, and now Anderson's release of current documents, appeared to have focused new concern throughout the government over the troubled security classification system.

Hebert assigned the new probe, which will begin shortly after Congress reconvenes Jan. 18, to a subcommittee headed by Rep. Lucien Nedzi (D-Mich.), a critic of the Pentagon and of administration policy in Vietnam.

In a telephone interview last night, Nedzi said that "it is not my intent to investigate the leak" of documents to Anderson.

"What we want to go into are the general problems of classification and security, how much is required and how it is handled and what kind of new legislation may be necessary," Nedzi said.

He acknowledged, however, that the Anderson documents, three of which appeared in full in The Washington Post yesterday, would "almost necessarily" come up during the probe.

Meanwhile, government investigators pressed their efforts to locate the source of Anderson's documents.

A report circulated yesterday among high-level administration sources that the investigation had pointed offices in the Pentagon as the probable source of

memoranda describing meetings of the National Security Council's Washington Special Action Group.

The sources stressed that the memoranda, prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and for G. Warren Nutter, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, had been circulated only within the Pentagon.

They said they were especially surprised by the leak of the memoranda, because it would be relatively easy to trace their limited distribution.

Other government officials, however, pointed their fingers elsewhere.

One White House official said he suspected that the State Department was the source of the security breach. "You know that place leaks like a sieve," he said, especially in instances that might make Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, look bad.

At the Pentagon, on the other hand, attention was diverted to the National Security Council.

The Justice Department continued to decline comment on the continuing FBI investigation.

Anderson continues his battle against government secrecy today, switching from the Indo-Pakistani war to secret White House documents used by President Nixon in preparation for meetings at San Clemente with Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato.

In a column distributed to 700 newspapers, including The Washington Post, Anderson discloses the contents of briefing papers prepared for the President.

Those papers, Anderson says, indicate that Sato has been dismayed with American policy in the Far East and is considering an independent Japanese approach to China.

Anderson quotes a cable from Armin Meyer, U. S. Ambassador to Japan, which said that "whereas heretofore anti-Americanism was pretty much special vehicle for opposition parties and Japanese tendentious press, developments of past few months have

fostered seeds of doubt within normally American-oriented community."

Meyer also told Washington that the Japanese have the "impression that Japan is being asked to maintain cold-war confrontation posture while President's mission to Peking gives (the U.S. government) advantage of appearing to be more progressive and peace-minded."

In San Clemente, one Japanese diplomat in the Sato party told Washington Post reporter Stanley Karnow that it was "alarming" to learn the content of the secret American papers.

"I must pay my compliments to the White House," he added, however. "They understand Japanese attitudes very well." The diplomat said he was especially concerned by references in today's Anderson column to growing interest in Japan in a revision of the American-Japanese security treaty.

Assistant White House press secretary Gerald Warren continued to refuse comment on any of the disclosures in the Anderson columns, and Kissinger, who is in San Clemente with the President, refused to discuss them.

In response to a question about Kissinger's earlier comment to reporters that Anderson had taken comments about India and Pakistan "out of context," Warren said, "I am sure Dr. Kissinger stands by what he said. . . . The President is aware of the matter."

Anderson said Tuesday that he was releasing the full texts of the three documents to refute Kissinger's claim.

There was a run on Anderson's Washington office yesterday for copies of the secret documents which had appeared in The Washington Post.

By day's end, a member of his staff said, 18 news organizations had picked up copies of the three memoranda and another nine had asked that they be sent in the mail.

The New York Times, Chicago Sun-Times, The San Francisco Chronicle and The

Boston Globe all published the texts of the memoranda in yesterday's editions after they received them from the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service.

The widespread appearance of the documents in newspapers throughout the country appeared to obviate the possibility of any action in court by the Justice Department, as in the case of the Pentagon papers.

The New York Times said it would publish the documents in today's editions.

Responding to Anderson's suggestion Tuesday that the secret documents and others in his possession could be made available to Congress as the basis for an investigation of American policy toward India and Pakistan, a high-

ranking aide for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said, "I think that's fine."

Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), chairman of the committee, was in the Caribbean on vacation and could not be reached for comment.

Fulbright staff aides directed attention, however, to a report issued by the Foreign Relations Committee on Dec. 16, which said, "The problem for Congress in the foreign affairs field . . . goes beyond reducing unnecessary classification."

The report added, "It involves finding a way for Congress to make certain that it receives the full information necessary for exercising its war and foreign policy powers, including information which most people would agree should be kept secret from potential enemies."

"It may also involve finding a way for Congress to share in determining what information is classified and thus kept secret from the American people."

That appeared to be the focus of the upcoming investigation by the House Armed Services Subcommittee. Nedzi said that it might not be "appropriate" to look into Kissinger's activities, but said the probe would focus on the

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